

Technology Planning on the Lite Side Sample

- 1) Contact information for the Library. Please include contact information for the director and/or the person responsible for managing the library's technology.

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- 2) How do you propose to use telecommunications and information technology to improve library services over the next 3 years?

Virtual Public Library has two technology-related library service goals:

- Local history preservation and access
VPL is working with the Virtual Historical Society on a project to microfilm and complete the indexing of the Virtual Weekly Press. We are also scanning and digitizing a collection of historical photographs and working with the Virtual High School to mount the index and photographs on a new Virtual History website.
- On-going education for our citizens
We are seeing increasing numbers of Virtual library users interested and involved in various distance learning programs. It is our library's goal to improve the speed of our internet connectivity to better enable our library users to take part in web conferencing. We are also working with Virtual Community College to ensure that students have access to on-line resources through via the public library.

- 3) How will staff be trained to use these technologies?

We have sent staff to state library sponsored workshops on MS Windows and Office software and will continue to do so when such opportunities are offered in our area. Our partnerships with the historical society, high school and community college have enabled us to share train the trainer responsibilities. A representative from our cooperative attends relevant regional training sessions and comes back and trains others in the community. We are looking at sending a representative to the Colorado Digitization Conference in 2005. We also send a representative to the annual Twodot Distance Learning Symposium.

4) What kinds of telecommunications services, hardware, software, etc. will be needed to improve library services?

- Local history project. Digitization projects require scanning and storage capacity. While we currently have adequate capacity in both areas, we expect to have to purchase a new file server within the next year. The Virtual History website will initially reside on the high school's web server but we plan to move it to a dedicated web server to be housed in the library within the next two years. To do so, we will need a new web server, firewall and security. We have been creating CD-ROMs of the data for the last couple of years. New computers we are buying for the project have DVD burning capabilities as we attempt to ensure that the data will continue to be accessible for the long term.
- On-going learning. We have identified the key components of our on-going learning program as providing sufficient public access computing stations, adequate bandwidth for streaming video and audio transmissions, and access to print and on-line resources. We are aware, however, that as a largely rural county, not all of our patrons have ready access to either the library or the internet. We use the VPL website, a print newsletter and a regular column in the weekly newspaper to keep our patrons aware of library services. VPL currently has 5 public access computers, which are in use for approximately 80% of the library's hours. Unfortunately, we don't have room for any additional workstations in the library's current space. Therefore we plan to add a wireless access point within the next three years. This will enable patrons to bring in their own laptops to use on the library's network. We presume that we will add an additional DSL line for wireless access, which may also provide internet access to the history project web server. VPL subscribes to the state full-text periodical database. In addition, we maintain a list of on-line resources of local interest accessible via the VPL website. VPL is joining the statewide virtual reference project. We have limited library hours and believe it is

important to offer our patrons reference assistance when they need it. VPL uses OCLC ILL web to provide efficient interlibrary loan service and has a mailing service for books and articles.

- 5) How will your current budget allow you to acquire and maintain the hardware, software, training, and other services necessary to make the technology work for you?
- The historical project is being funded entirely by grants and donations. The library's role in the project is currently to provide a staff computer and scanner for use 5 hours/week. We will also house the web server and are arranging with our local ISP for the additional DSL line to be donated to the project.
 - VPL has approximately \$2,000 in its annual budget for computer replacement and upgrade, \$2000 for telecommunications and internet costs, \$1000 for training and tech support. We know this is not sufficient to make the technology work for us. We've written five grants over the past two years including the Gates Staying Connected Grant. This is also why we've formed partnerships with the Virtual Historical Society, High School and Community College and are looking for new ones. VPL's board will be meeting with the Virtual Medical Center and Job Service to look for ways we might be able to work together toward common goals.
- 6) How will you know whether or not you've been successful? What provisions can you make for responding to new developments and opportunities?
- The local history project has established benchmarks for digitization and indexing whereby we'll be able to judge our progress. We expect to begin testing the web site within the next 6 months with the help of our local genealogical group. This should give us some idea of the usability and accessibility of the web site. Once the Virtual History web site is up and running, we'll look at web access statistics to judge how successful we've been at promoting the site. We'll also have forms on the site so users can give us general feedback. In addition, we plan to have a link to the virtual reference service so users can get more information.
 - On-going education. We already track usage statistics of public access computers, on-line databases, library web site, virtual reference, ILL, etc. So we have a pretty good idea of quantity. If our numbers go up or down significantly, we are prepared to look for possible reasons and attempt to address them in a timely manner. But we don't really know very much about quality, how

satisfied are VPL's users with the services we are providing? What else might they want and need from us? We would like to have a short survey designed for users of the VPL web site asking what type of information they were looking for and whether or not they found it. A similar print survey could be given to walk-in patrons. Hopefully, some of the suggestions will be fairly easy to implement. We're still looking for ways to reach Virtual citizens who are not regular VPL patrons.